

Dear Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Diana Mennone and I am writing to you on behalf of the Governor's budget as it affects the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). My brother has lived at Southbury Training School for almost 40 years. The ICF/ID certified standard of care at Southbury which includes 50% reimbursement from the federal government is a quality program and should be continued for those choosing to live there. Downsizing at STS has occurred over the past years and continues with cost saving results. As in other sections within the department facing fewer staff and resources, Director Eugene Harvey and his dedicated staff has been innovative in continuing the same continuity of care for the elderly residents and some of DDS's most medically fragile people.

I am a member of the DDS Council and its Advocacy Sub-Committee. I understand and empathize with the challenges of the other people receiving services from DDS. Below I have listed 7 Principles that the Advocacy Sub-Committee supports. I want to make a special appeal to add new funds not currently in the proposed budget for absolutely necessary employment and adult day programs for new graduates as of June 2017 and 2018.

7 PRINCIPLES TO UNITE PEOPLE AND ADVOCACY GROUPS IN THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY - "The I/DD 7"

This is a crucial year to both protect the services for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities and find new ways to meet the unmet needs of thousands of families. Hopefully a unified approach will help all of us in these difficult times.

1. Funding appropriated by the legislature should not revert to the General Fund when DDS identifies and implements efficiencies and cost savings. Such savings should be used to serve those on the waiting list for residential services.
2. The waiting list for residential services should be revised to ensure that it includes all DDS eligible individuals in need of residential services. Information about their needs should include the timing and type of services that are required to serve each individual.
3. A wide array of residential services should be made available by DDS to meet the very different needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities.
4. Employment and day services budget must include funding for the projected number of graduates on a full-time basis for the entire year. Individuals and families should not be left waiting for funding as individuals complete their last year of school.
5. Increase funding and availability for respite care in a variety of settings.
6. A fair wage for all direct care staff, both in the private and public sector.
7. The State of Connecticut should maximize the reimbursements it receives from the Federal government. Cuts to DDS funding generally result in the loss of approximately \$50. of Federal revenue for each cut of \$100. in expenditures.

Thank you for reading my testimony,
Diana Mennone
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